Hana to Ryuu

Vol. 9

by Kazuma Kodaka

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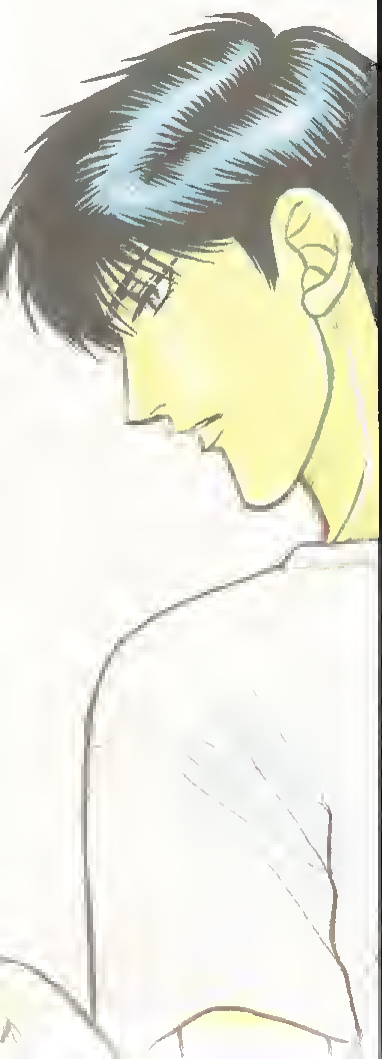

I WANT TO BELIEVE IN THAT MAN. AND IN THE PEOPLE WORKING BY HIS SIDE...

Presented by K²COMPANY
1998
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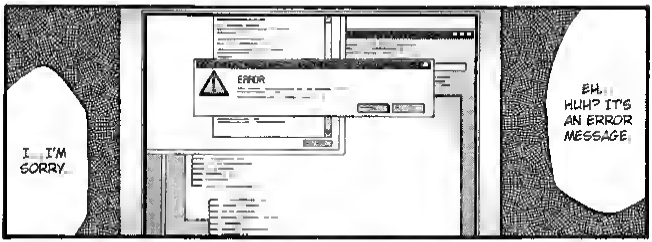
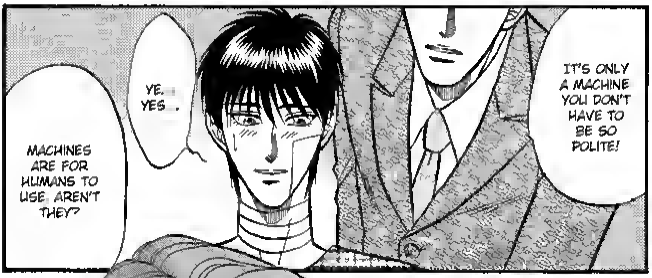
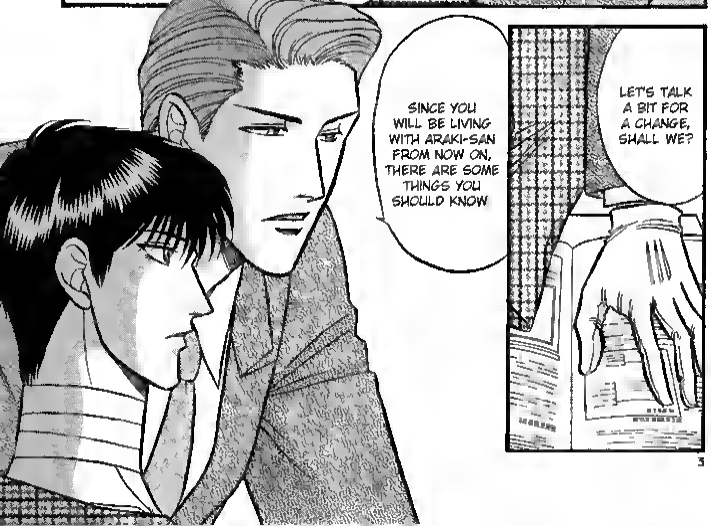
華と龍
九
蛇の螺旋


ERROR
I...I'M SORRY...
EH,... HUH? IT'S AN ERROR MESSAGE.


YE,... YES...
MACHINES ARE FOR HUMANS TO USE, AREN'T THEY?
IT'S ONLY A MACHINE YOU DON'T HAVE TO BE SO POLITE!


SINCE YOU WILL BE LIVING WITH ARAKI-SAN FROM NOW ON, THERE ARE SOME THINGS YOU SHOULD KNOW.
LET'S TALK A BIT FOR A CHANGE, SHALL WE?

HANA TO RYUU 9

THE SNAKE'S COILS

Beep
WHAT IS IT?
THE CHAIRMAN IS LOOKING FOR YOU
VERY WELL, I'LL BE RIGHT THERE
EXCUSE ME
COME IN
knock knock

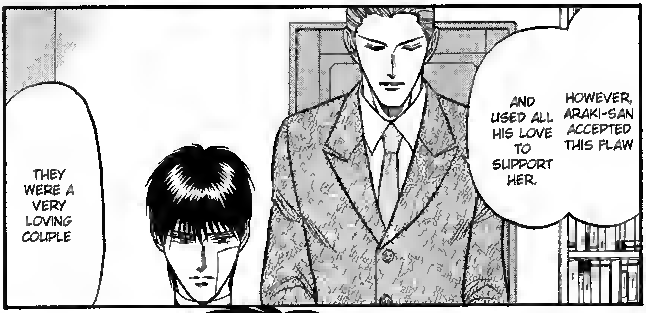
ARAKI... DIDN'T I TELL YOU TO STAY AT HOME TO RECUPERATE?
YOU CALLED FOR ME, SIR?

YOU NEED TO TAKE BETTER CARE OF YOURSELF! FIRST YOU INSIST ON LEAVING THE HOSPITAL AND THEN YOU GET INTO A FIGHT.
I STILL HAVE SOME THINGS TO INVESTIGATE
MY APOLOGIES

ARE YOU GOING TO CONTINUE TO BEAR THE RESPONSIBILITY OF HISAKO'S DEATH ALL BY YOURSELF?

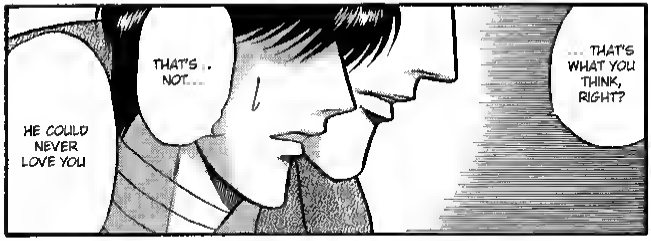
YOU STILL HAVEN'T FORGIVEN YOURSELF, HAVE YOU?

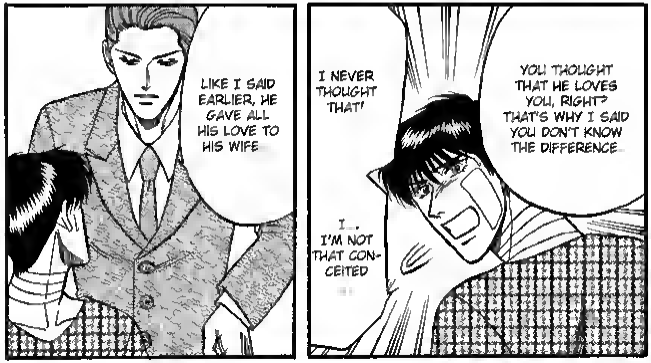
ABOUT ARAKI-SAN'S WIFE?
YES, HISAKO-SAN WAS A VERY LOVELY LADY, ALWAYS CAREFREE AND SMILING...
BUT... SHE WAS SLIGHTLY MENTALLY DISABLED...


HOWEVER, ARAKI-SAN ACCEPTED THIS FLAW AND USED ALL HIS LOVE TO SUPPORT HER.
THEY WERE A VERY LOVING COUPLE

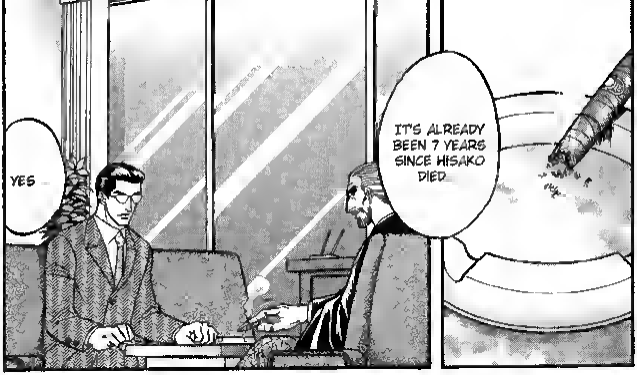
HE... WAS A LOVING HUSBAND
HE SHOWERED HER WITH EVERY BIT OF LOVE HE HAD
I DON'T LIKE THIS... MY CHEST HURTS...

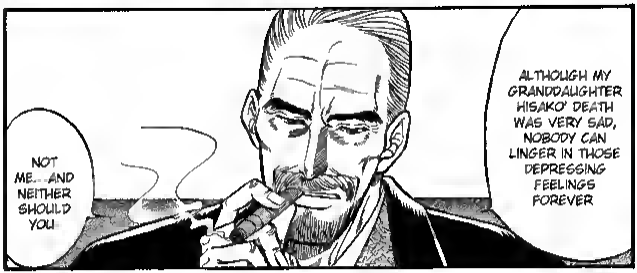
DAMN. I DON'T WANT TO HEAR ABOUT HIS WIFE.
IT'S EASY TO SEE THAT ARAKI-SAN IS A LOVING HUSBAND
WHY... ARE YOU TELLING ME THIS ...?
DIFF. ERENCE
I'M TELLING YOU SO THAT YOU WILL UNDERSTAND
"YOU'RE LOVED BY ARAKI-SAN"
THE DIF- FERENCE BETWEEN LOVE AND SYMPATHY
BLUSH


... THAT'S WHAT YOU THINK, RIGHT?
THAT'S . . NOT...
HE COULD NEVER LOVE YOU


YOU THOUGHT THAT HE LOVES YOU, RIGHT? THAT'S WHY I SAID YOU DON'T KNOW THE DIFFERENCE.
I NEVER THOUGHT THAT!
I... I'M NOT THAT CONCEITED
LIKE I SAID EARLIER, HE GAVE ALL HIS LOVE TO HIS WIFE.

AND NOW, THERE IS NOT A SHARD OF LOVE LEFT IN HIS HEART.
HE HAS NEVER LOVED ANYONE ELSE FROM THE DAY SHE DIED


YES...
IT'S ALREADY BEEN 7 YEARS SINCE HISAKO DIED...


NOT ME... AND NEITHER SHOULD YOU
ALTHOUGH MY GRANDDAUGHTER HISAKO' DEATH WAS VERY SAD, NOBODY CAN LINGER IN THOSE DEPRESSING FEELINGS FOREVER

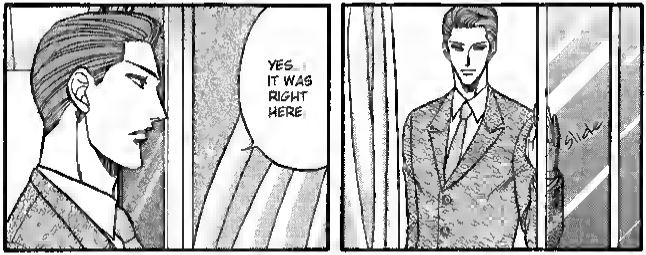
IN FACT, IT MAKES YOU STRONGER, AND HAVE MORE EMOTIONS
HAVING SOMEONE TO PROTECT DOESN'T MAKE YOU WEEK

ARAKI... YOU NEED A FAMILY

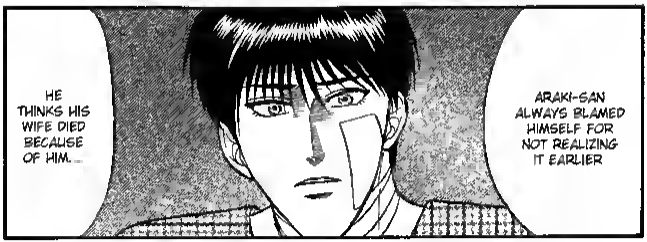
WHAT HAVE YOU DECIDED TO DO ABOUT KAZAMA RYUUJI-KUN?
I'M NOT ASKING YOU TO GET RE-MARRIED RIGHT AWAY! YOU SHOULD DO WHAT'S RIGHT FOR YOU
AH, I CALLED YOU HERE FOR ANOTHER REASON...
YES
IF RYUUJI-KUN IS AGREE-ABLE TO IT, THAT IS, BUT...
YOU DON'T LIKE THE IDEA?
IT'S NOT THAT...
I REALLY APPRECIATE IT... IT WOULD BE THE BEST THING FOR HIM...
BUT...
ADOPT HIM... SIR?
HE CAN'T BE HAPPY FREELOADING OFF YOU FOREVER AT LEAST THAT'S WHAT I THINK...
I'D LIKE TO ADOPT RYUUJI-KUN AS MY SON.

I KNOW I'M BEING SELFISH HERE... BUT I WANT...
HIM TO TAKE MY NAME
VERY WELL
BUT? FEEL FREE TO SPEAK UP
OH?
PLEASE THINK OF IT AS A KIND OF LOVE
YOU'RE LYING... HE TOLD ME JUST YESTER-DAY...
YOU SAY HE HAS... NO LOVE LEFT...

HIS WIFE WAS A BIT NEUROTIC...
PITY...? HE DID THAT BECAUSE HE FELT SORRY FOR ME...?


YES... IT WAS RIGHT HERE
Slide

THIS IS WHERE SHE JUMPED TO HER DEATH

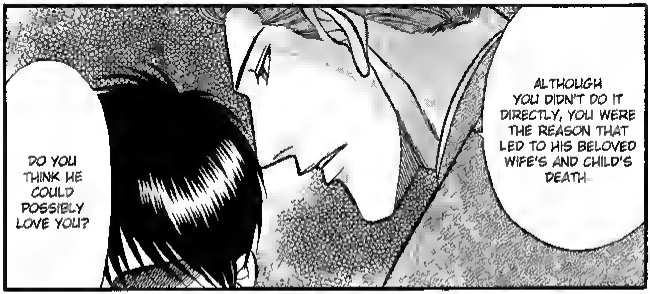

ARAKI-SAN ALWAYS BLAMED HIMSELF FOR NOT REALIZING IT EARLIER
HE THINKS HIS WIFE DIED BECAUSE OF HIM...

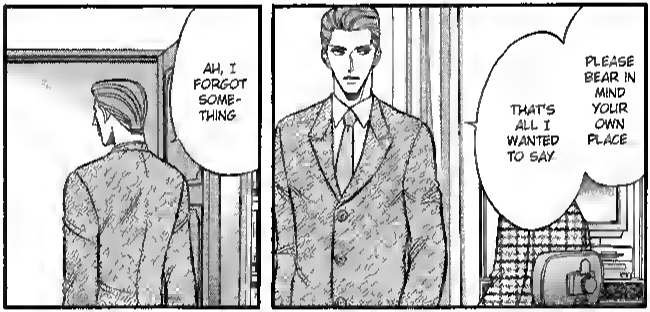
BUT IT IS NOT ARAKI-SAN'S FAULT— I KNOW THAT VERY WELL!
THE ONE WHO DROVE HIS WIFE TO COMMIT SUICIDE...

TO FULFILL HIS OBLIGATION TO 'KAZAMA' HE EVEN SACRIFICED HIS FAMILY, JUST TO SECRETLY PROTECT 'KAZAMA RYUUJI'...
WHY... ME...
HE WAS AT FAULT FOR BEING SO BLIND... AND HE HAS SPENT THE PAST 7 YEARS REGRETTING IT

WAS YOU, KAZAMA RYUUJI-SAN...

AH!
WHEN HIS WIFE... PASSED AWAY, SHE WAS 3 MONTHS PREGNANT
IT WAS ARAKI-SAN'S FIRST CHILD!
THE ONE WHO KILLED HIS WIFE AND CHILD WAS "KAZAMA RYUUJI"
THIS IS WHAT I THINK


ALTHOUGH YOU DIDN'T DO IT DIRECTLY, YOU WERE THE REASON THAT LED TO HIS BELOVED WIFE'S AND CHILD'S DEATH
DO YOU THINK HE COULD POSSIBLY LOVE YOU?



I DON'T THINK YOU ARE A HUMAN BEING
YOU HAVE A FACE OF SOMEONE WHO COULDN'T HURT A FLY, YET YOU BRING DEATH TO EVERYONE AROUND YOU
I THINK YOU ARE A SHIN-IGAMI

17 *T/N SHINIGAMI = GOD OF DEATH

Open
EXCUSE ME
I'M GOING BACK TO THE OFFICE,
Bump
I AM...SUCH A FOOL..
REALLY SHAMELESS...

I WANT TO GIVE TO RYUUJI WHAT I COULDN'T GIVE TO THAT CHILD.
FOR THE SAKE OF THE CHILD THAT DIED WITH HISAKO
YES.
SO IN OTHER WORDS, YOU WANT TO BECOME RYUUJI'S FATHER?
AND HAVING HIM STAY WITH ME HAS ALSO CHANGED ME SOMEWHAT.
HE STILL SEEMS TO FIGHT AGAINST THE IDEA OF HAVING A FAMILY. BUT I ALREADY SEE HIM AS PART OF MINE.
YEAH. AS LONG AS HE CAN GET USED TO THE IDEA.
IS THAT SO? YOU WILL HAVE A GROWN-UP SON RATHER SUDDENLY.
SINCE YOU TWO HAVEN'T BEEN LIVING TOGETHER FOR VERY LONG. WILL THAT BE ALRIGHT?

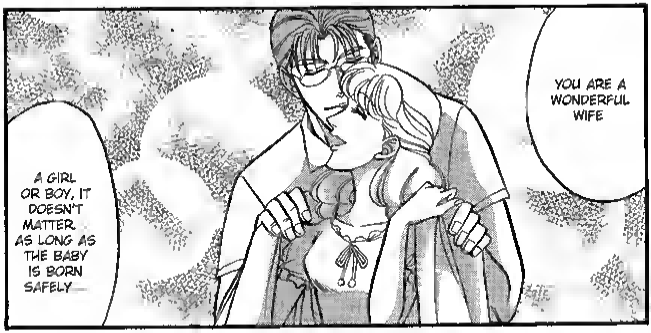
IT'S BECOMING EASIER TO SMILE NOW
YES, I'VE CHANGED.
OH? OH, YOU FEEL LIKE YOU'VE CHANGED?
I'M SORRY TO HAVE MADE YOU WORRY...
heh
AHHH... THAT'S A RELIEF THEN
YEAH... IF YOU'RE REALLY SORRY THEN HURRY AND GET BACK HOME
PUSH
...I SEE INDEED AN IMPROVE-MENT
CERTAINLY, WHAT IS IT?
AH, YES! CAN YOU PASS A MESSAGE TO RYUUJI-KUN FOR ME?

SIR...
IF HE DOESN'T WISH TO STAY WITH YOU, THERE'S STILL AN OLD MAN HERE WAITING TO ADOPT HIM!
CLOSE
I'LL TELL HIM THAT IF HE SHOULD REJECT ME
IT'S HIBIKI
I'M COMING BACK TO THE OFFICE NOW
NO...HE SAYS HE WANTS TO TRY OUT THE REST ON HIS OWN.

HMPH
BEEP
YES GOOD-BYE
HAHAHA
KIDS AND WOMEN ARE SO EASY TO DEAL WITH...
BELIEVING EVERY-THING THEY ARE BEING TOLD
AND FORGETTING EVERYTHING THE PERSON THEY LOVE SAID—LOVE IS SUCH A FLIMSY THING

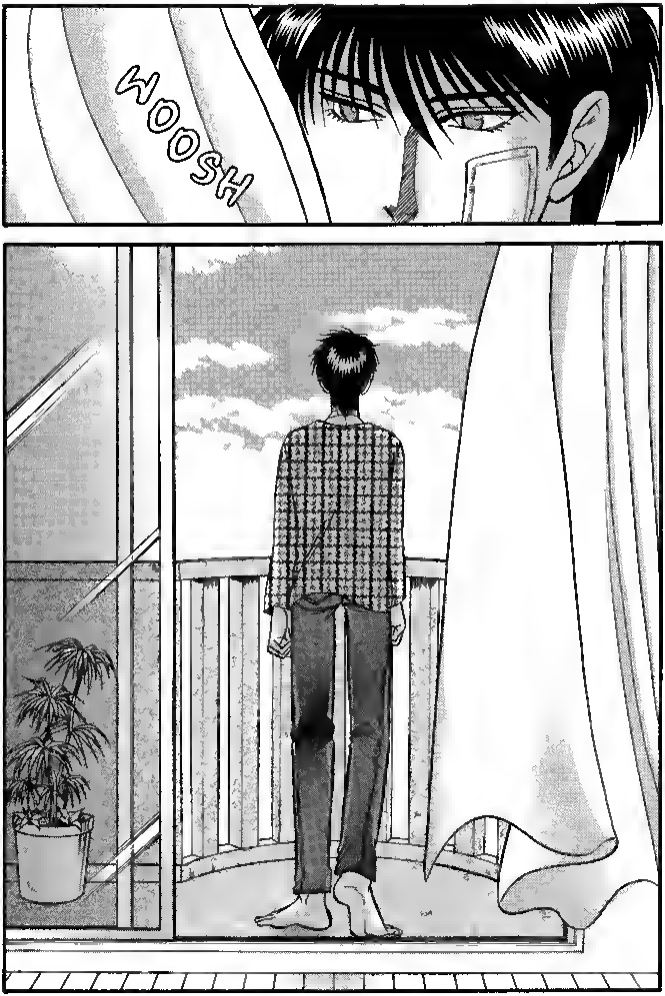
DON'T COME NEAR ME! BIG LIAR! I HATE YOU!
WEAKLINGS HAVE NO RIGHT TO LOVE A MAN LIKE HIM
I DON'T WANT TO HEAR IT! DON'T COME ANY CLOSER!
THIS IS WHAT YOUR HUSBAND ALWAYS TELLS ME
NO! GET AWAY FROM ME!
HISAKO IS DISGUSTING
NO IT'S NOT! IT'S A BABY! IT'S HITOSHI'S BABY!
HISAKO IS DISGUSTING THERE'S A MONSTER LIVING IN HER WOMB
SLIP

AH .
THE BABY ....
BUMP
SAAAA
HISAKO IS ..


YOU ARE A WONDERFUL WIFE
A GIRL OR BOY, IT DOESN'T MATTER AS LONG AS THE BABY IS BORN SAFELY...

MADAM...IT WAS YOUR FAULT...
CARRYING HIS CHILD AND MONOPOLIZING ALL HIS LOVE FOR YOURSELF,
AND ALWAYS WEARING THAT VICTORIOUS SMILE...

THE MORE THEY ARE BEING LOVED, THE MORE LOVE THEY WANT...
THAT'S RIGHT... THAT WOMAN AND THAT KID ARE BOTH THE SAME.
WHEN I'M NOT EVEN ALLOWED TO LOVE HIM ---!
BECAUSE THEY SHOWED THAT SATISFIED SMILE OF BEING LOVED IN FRONT OF ME



-END-

HERE ARE THE TRANSLATIONS FOR A FEW BASIC JAPANESE TERMS USED IN THIS STORY

HANA = FLOWER
RYUU = DRAGON

OKAASAN/OKAACHAN = MOTHER/MOM OR MOMMY
OTOUSAN = FATHER
OBASAN = AUNT
ONEESAN OR NEESAN = (OLDER) SISTER
ONIISAN OR NIISAN = (OLDER) BROTHER
OJIISAN =GRANDFATHER

YAKUZA = GANGSTER
GUMI = GANG, YAKUZA FAMILY
DON/BOSS = LEADER OF THE GUMI

NOTE: IN THE GUMI MEMBERS WILL REFER TO ONE ANOTHER AS 'BROTHER' EVEN IF THERE IS NO BLOOD RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THEM. THE DON'S WIFE IS RESPECTFULLY REFERRED TO AS 'OLDER SISTER' BY OTHER MEMBERS
OJIISAN (GRANDFATHER) IS ALSO USED TO REFER TO OLDER MEN IN GENERAL, NOT ONLY TO ONE'S RELATIVE.